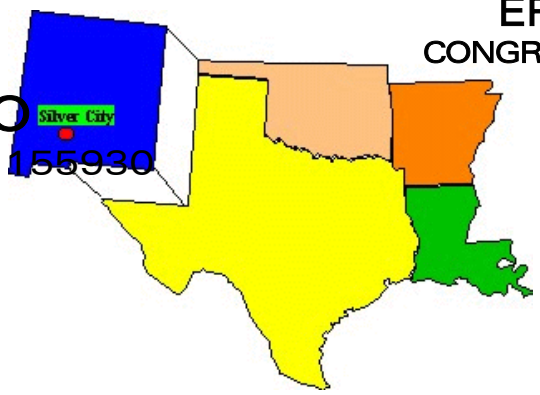
CLEVELAND MILL

NEW MEXICO

EPA ID# NMD981155930



EPA REGION 6
CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT 02
Grant County
Updated:
June 27, 2003

Site Description

Location:
- 5 miles northeast of Silver City

Population:
- Approximately 1,200 area residents, mainly along Little Walnut Creek, draw drinking water from private wells within 3 miles of the site.

Setting:
- The site is an abandoned lead, zinc, and copper mine and mill covering about 4 acres near mine and about 10 acres of the bed of Little Walnut Creek.
- It is located 100 yards south of the Continental Divide at the headwaters of Little Walnut Creek.
- An on-site reservoir (now dry) was used for recreational purposes .
- Tailings from the mill were deposited in piles in the mill area and then washed into Little Walnut Creek.

Hydrology:
- Run-off from the facility had acidified Little Walnut Creek and has contaminated it with metals. Residential wells installed along the creek, though not contaminated with toxic substances, had shown indicator parameters which indicate that they have been affected by the mine tailings.

Present Status and Issues

- The Site is currently remediated. Operation and Maintenance activities, including site inspection and ground water monitoring are ongoing. The next inspection and monitoring is scheduled for late-July 2003.

Wastes and Volumes

- Principal pollutants: arsenic, beryllium, cadmium, lead, and zinc.
- Volume: 164,960 cubic yards in about 9 piles and in the streambed.

Site Assessment and Ranking

NPL LISTING HISTORY
Site HRS Score: 40.37
Proposed Date: 6/24/88
Final Date: 3/31/89
NPL Update: No. 7

The Remediation Process

Site History:

- From 1910 to 1916, 150,000 tons of ore were processed at Cleveland Mill.
- Tailings were disposed of outside of the mill building at the headwaters of a creek.
- Mill closed and moved in 1919.
- From 1919 through the 1950s, the site was leased to a series of people.
- Limited information is available on site activities from 1950 through the present (assumed abandoned).
- In 1985, the New Mexico Environment Department (NMED) conducted a Site Inspection (SI) which indicated that run-off from the facility into Little Walnut Creek contained elevated concentrations of metals.
- Special Notice Letters were sent to the Potentially Responsible Parties (PRPs) on 12/27/89.
- Good faith offers from the PRPs were not received during 60 day moratorium; therefore, EPA performed a remedial investigation/feasibility study (RI/FS) using funds from the Superfund Trust Fund.
- The RI/FS reports and the Proposed Plan were released to the public in April 1993. An extended public comment period for the Proposed Plan was held from April 9, 1993, through June 9, 1993.
- The Record of Decision(ROD) issued September 22, 1993 called for excavation, off site reprocessing and recycling, and site revegetation.
- The Consent Decree between EPA and three PRPs was entered on June 12, 1995.
- Because no acceptable reprocessing facility could be found and the site was degrading rapidly, an Action Memorandum was issued on July 11, 1997. The removal action was a time-critical action and involved treatment of the tailings and sediment and disposal in an on-site cell. The remedy began as a removal action because surface water quality deteriorated due to acidic runoff carrying metals into Little Walnut Creek.
- The Administrative Order on Consent (AOC) between EPA and the PRPs became effective September 23, 1997. Under the AOC, the PRPs performed the removal action and funded EPA and NMED oversight of the removal action.
- Construction of the multi-layered cap, the last construction step in the removal action, was completed in late October.
- Site restoration activities, including engineered erosion control measures and reseeding, were completed on November 19, 1998.
- The final site report, dated December 10, 1998, marked the end of the removal action.
- A public open house meeting was held on June 9, 1999, to discuss the proposed amendment to the Record of Decision and the site status.
- A site completion ceremony, attended by approximately 60 people, was held on July 16, 1999, to celebrate the completion of the clean-up of the site.
- An Amended Record of Decision, stating that no further remedial action is necessary at the site, was issued on September 20, 1999.
- A Preliminary Close Out Report, marking the end of remedial activities at the site, was signed on September 23, 1999.
- The February 2000 Operations and Maintenance Plan was approved by EPA.
- The Final Site Closeout Report was signed on June 16, 2000.
- A notice for Direct Deletion from the NPL was placed in the Federal Register on May 22, 2001.
- The Site was deleted from the NPL on July 23, 2001.
- The first Five-year Review Report was signed on August 22, 2002, after an eight-month review period. This report found that the remedy is protective of human health and the environment. The remedial actions at the Site are functioning as designed, and the Site has been maintained appropriately. No deficiencies were noted that impact the protectiveness of the remedy.

Health Considerations:

- Direct contact and ingestion threat; shallow, on-site aquifer is contaminated with metals.

Other Environmental Risks:

- Acidic run-off from facility into Little Walnut Creek potentially transports metals into residential wells.

Record of Decision

Signed: September 22, 1993

Remedy Selected: Off site reprocessing, recycling and disposal

Other Remedies Considered	Reason Not Chosen
1. No Action	Not Protective
2. On site stabilization/disposal	Future leaching potential/long term O&M
3. On site disposal/capping	" " " " " "
4. On site stabilization/off site disposal	Cost

Community Involvement

- Community Involvement Plan: Developed 3/91
- Open houses and workshops: 8/91, 4/93, 7/94, 9/94, 11/94, 1/95, 7/97
- Proposed Plan Fact Sheet and Public Meeting: 4/8/93
- Milestone Fact Sheets: 4/93, 1/94, 3/94, 7/97
- Open House/Citizen Advisory Committee Meetings, 5/94, 7/94, 9/94, 11/94, 2/95, 6/95, 12/95, 10/97
- Citizens on site mailing list: 400
- Constituency Interest:
  - Primary community concerns are with other active mining operations, transportation routes of mining materials.
- Community Working Group established 11/94.
- Site Repository: Silver City Library; NMED Office, Santa Fe, NM; EPA Office, Dallas, TX
- Ceremony and tour to kickoff removal action: 7/97
- Completion ceremony: 7/99

Technical Assistance Grant

- Availability Notice: None
- Letters of Intent Received: None
- Grant Award: N/A
- Current Status: No community interest in applying for TAG grant although information has been provided.

Contacts

- **Remedial Project Manager (EPA):** Donald Williams, 214/665/2197, Mail Sta. 6SF-LT
- **State Contact:** Chris Meehan, 505/476-3777
- **Community Involvement Coord. (EPA):** Beverly Negri, 214/665-8157, Mail Sta. 6SF-PO
- **Attorney (EPA):** James Costello, 214/665-8045, Mail Sta. 6SF-DL
- **Prime Contractor: RI/FS** - E&E; **Design/Construction** - PRP lead (Mining Remedial Recovery Company), EPA and NMED oversight
- **Ombudsman (EPA):** Arnold Ondarza, 1-800-533-3508

Enforcement

- Remedial Investigation/Feasibility Study(RI/FS) Special Notice Letters issued 12/89.
- RI/FS was conducted using fund monies.
- ROD issued 9/93 for treatment and disposal of tailings and sediment and ground water monitoring.
- Remedial Design/Remedial Action(RD/RA) Special Notice Letters issued 11/93.
- RD/RA Consent Decree (CD) between EPA and PRPs entered 6/12/95.
- Action Memorandum issued 7/97 for consolidation of tailings and sediment.
- Administrative Order on Consent (AOC) between EPA and PRPs to implement Action Memorandum became effective September 23, 1997.

Benefits

- After the removal action, the site was addressed in a single long-term remedial phase that focused on contamination at the entire site and monitoring of the ground water.

- Remediation of the tailings addressed a source of contamination to Little Walnut Creek and a potential threat to the residential wells that were already established.

- The site and adjacent five mile stretch of Little Walnut Creek is in a rapidly developing residential area.